

# MISSOURI CONSERVATIONIST

VOLUME 86, ISSUE 5, MAY 2025  
SERVING NATURE & YOU





# BE BEARWISE

## AT HOME BASICS

Missouri is bear country — you could encounter a bear even if you never go into the woods. Follow these tips to keep bears away from your home and property.



### Never Feed or Approach Bears

Intentionally feeding bears or allowing them to access anything that smells or tastes like food teaches bears to approach homes and people looking for more.

### Secure Food, Garbage, and Recycling

Keep your trash bins clean to reduce odors. Store trash cans in a sturdy locked building or a bear-resistant enclosure. Set garbage out the morning of pick-up.

### Remove Bird Feeders When Bears are Active

Birdseed has lots of calories and bears love it. In spring when bears are on the move, provide birds with shelter, perches, and water instead of seed.

### Never Leave Pet Food Outdoors

If you feed pets outside, remove food and bowls after feeding. Store pet food where bears can't see or smell it.

### Clean and Store Grills

Clean grills after each use and make sure all grease, fat, and food particles are removed. Store clean grills and smokers in a secure area that keeps bears out.

### Alert Neighbors to Bear Activity

If you see bears or find evidence of bear activity, tell your neighbors and share information on how to avoid interactions with bears.

**Bears have adapted to living near people; it's up to us to adapt to living near bears.**

## If You Encounter a Black Bear

- **If you see a bear before it notices you**, don't approach. Stand still, enjoy the moment, then quietly move away.
- **If a bear sees you**, back away slowly. Never run. Running may trigger a chase response.
- **If a bear approaches**, hold your ground, wave your arms, and yell "Hey bear!" until it leaves. Always stay with your group. **If the bear keeps approaching**, use bear spray.
- **If a black bear makes contact with you**, do NOT play dead. Instead, fight back aggressively.



Learn more at  
**BEARWISE.ORG**





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## MISSOURI CONSERVATIONIST



### ON THE COVER

Rose-breasted grosbeak

📷 **NOPPADOL PAOTHONG**

200–400mm lens  
+ 1.4 teleconverter,  
f/8, 1/125 sec, ISO 1600

**GOVERNOR**  
Mike Kehoe

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# Inbox



## Letters to the Editor

Submissions reflect readers' opinions and may be edited for length and clarity. Email [Magazine@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:Magazine@mdc.mo.gov) or write to us:

MISSOURI  
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## NATURE KNIGHTS

Many years ago, I attended Phillipsburg, MO grade school, which is no longer in existence. On Fridays of my fourth-grade year, we had a program called Nature Knights. I loved that class. We learned all about nature.

I remember my father cutting twigs off many kinds of trees, attaching them with twine to a piece of cardboard along with the name of each tree. My teacher was so impressed. I have never heard of Nature Knights since. I was wondering if you were familiar with it?

Dorothy Deckard Grovespring

*Editors' note: The Missouri Conservation Commission launched Nature Knights in 1939. It was a program that introduced children ages 6-16 to nature, conservation practices, and environmental stewardship. Participants could engage in activities and earn awards and certificates, which were designed by Walt Disney. The program was discontinued in 1959.*

## MISSOURI'S LEAST WANTED

I have been a long-time reader of the *Missouri Conservationist*. I grew up reading it and now I share it with my kids. I love that you include the section *Missouri's Least Wanted*. After learning Japanese

honeysuckle vine is invasive, my boys, Emmett (5) and Ian (3), and I have set out to rid our woods of it. We live on 30 acres of timberland and honeysuckle vine has taken over large swaths of it, choking out saplings and making hiking difficult. Since last fall, we have been able to restore part of a stream that flows behind our house.

Haley Brannan Sheldon

## A LEGACY

My father, Herbert Gerard Schuler Sr., recently passed, and my family was looking for a way to honor his life and help leave a legacy. While looking through some of his belongings, we found stacks and stacks of the *Missouri Conservationist* magazines that he had kept over the years. My dad was an avid outdoorsman who loved hunting and being surrounded by nature. He really treasured his issues of your magazine and looked forward to their arrival. Especially in his older years when it was harder for him to be active and get outside as much.

In honor of my father, we asked for donations to the Missouri Department of Conservation in his obituary. Friends and family did not disappoint, and we were overwhelmed by everyone's generosity. My dad would have been truly blown away and so grateful as well. I'm so thankful for the Missouri Department of Conservation and every time I see these magazines, I smile and think about my dad.

Rachel (Schuler) Eise via email

## Connect With Us!



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## Have a Question for a Commissioner?

Send a note using our online contact form at [mdc.mo.gov/commissioners](http://mdc.mo.gov/commissioners).

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The Missouri Department of Conservation protects and manages the fish, forest, and wildlife of the state. We facilitate and provide opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy, and learn about these resources.





### Want to see your photos in the *Missouri Conservationist*?

Submit your photos online via  
[flickr.com/groups/mdcreaderphotos-2025/](https://www.flickr.com/groups/mdcreaderphotos-2025/),  
[mdc.mo.gov/magazine-reader-photos](https://mdc.mo.gov/magazine-reader-photos)  
or by emailing [readerphoto@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:readerphoto@mdc.mo.gov)



1

1 | Ant with aphids  
by **Doug Phillips**,  
via Flickr

2 | Bailey's first  
fish by **Joseph and  
Jennifer Navarro**,  
via website  
submission

3 | Common  
snapping turtle by  
**Michelle Roach**,  
via Flickr



2



3



### Want another chance to see your photos in the magazine?

➔ In the December issue, we plan to feature even more great reader photos. Use the submission methods above to send us your best year-round pictures of native Missouri wildlife, flora, natural scenery, and friends and family engaged in outdoor activities. Please include where the photo was taken and what it depicts.



# Up Front

✳ As I complete my first year as MDC's director, I remain humbled to lead this organization and work alongside the people of this great state to fulfill the agency's mission. We've faced challenges over the last year, from floods to fires, from the emergence of new diseases to the continued expansion of others, and from the maintenance of aging infrastructure to the development of new partnerships. Through it all, one thing is certain — Missourians are passionate about their outdoors and pursuits. I've toured nearly every corner of the state, meeting with hunters, hikers, anglers, and birdwatchers. I've met with those who are passionate about prairies and wetlands, as well as landowners working to feed the nation while caring for the land and their families. There have been many amazing conversations highlighting the expectations of a wide diversity of folks while ensuring that our valuable fish, forest, and wildlife resources continue to thrive.

Ultimately it is our shared connection to the land that keeps Missouri's natural places and wild things thriving. Whether you are a hunter, hiker, gardener, educator, cattle producer, or row crop farmer, your passion and values shape a conservation ethic that makes this a truly amazing state. It's the continued commitment of conservation professionals and volunteers and the actions of those just trying to make a better life for themselves and their families that protect our grasslands, forests, and rivers, and the wildlife that depends upon them, preserving our collective outdoor heritage for future generations.

**JASON SUMNERS, DIRECTOR**

[JASON.SUMNERS@MDC.MO.GOV](mailto:JASON.SUMNERS@MDC.MO.GOV)

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## HABITAT MANAGEMENT

# How Do Birds and Forestry Mix?

Biologists are studying how forestry in the Ozarks affects bird populations over time

by Dianne Van Dien

✳ **The oak-hickory-pine forests of Missouri's** Ozarks are critical for many species of migratory birds. To keep these forests healthy as they age, management is required. But how do birds respond to forest management? The Missouri Ozark Forest Ecosystem Project (MOFEP) is helping to answer this and related questions.

MOFEP is a large-scale, 100-year experiment to study how wildlife and other ecosystem components respond to three common types of management: even-aged (creates a patchwork of similar-aged trees), uneven-aged (creates a mixture of tree ages), and no harvest (leaves mature forest untouched). Portions of even-aged and uneven-aged sites are harvested every 15–20 years.

“The research started in 1991 and that’s when the bird project started,” says MDC Avian Ecologist Janet Haslerig, who leads the MOFEP bird study.

Except for harvest years (1996 and 2011), surveys for bird abundance and nesting have been completed



The blue-winged warbler is one of several species that thrive in early successional (shrubby, young forest) habitat that grows in openings created by forest management.

annually. All species are recorded, but analyses focus on 11 that breed in the Ozarks and migrate south for winter. Five nest in mature forests and six in young forest habitat.

“As you might suspect, when we harvest trees, we see a reduction in mature-forest birds,” Haslerig reports, “but young-forest species increase because they like the shrubby vegetation that grows in areas that have been cut. Without management creating a range of forest ages, we wouldn’t have the habitat to support the young-forest species.”

But as the vegetation matures, the numbers change. Young-forest species peak within seven years of harvest and then begin declining.

These data measure the localized response of birds to tree harvests and forest regrowth, but over time, MOFEP will show how birds respond at the landscape scale. Although the project has many decades to go, the current 30 years of data still offer “lessons learned,” Haslerig says, that can be applied when managing for forest songbirds.

“MOFEP is nationally and internationally recognized as one of the most comprehensive forest management studies in North America,” she says. “It has shown that we can create habitat for birds as well as maintain healthy forests.”

## At a Glance

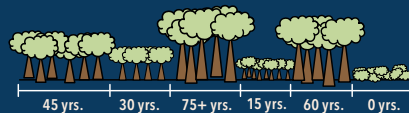
The MOFEP bird study looks at how 11 focal species respond to different forest management systems in the Ozarks.

- **Mature-forest species:** Acadian flycatcher, Kentucky warbler, ovenbird, wood thrush, worm-eating warbler
- **Young-forest species:** blue-winged warbler, hooded warbler, prairie warbler, indigo bunting, white-eyed vireo, yellow-breasted chat

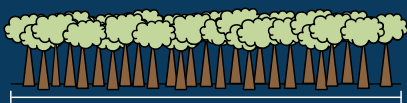
### Uneven-aged Management



### Even-aged Management



### No Harvest



**Partners:**  
Central Methodist University,  
Pittsburg State University,  
University of Missouri



# In Brief

News and updates from MDC

## LEAVE WILDLIFE WILD

YOUNG  
ANIMALS  
MAY APPEAR  
ABANDONED,  
BUT THAT'S  
SELDOM  
THE CASE



Whitetail fawn



Baby rabbits



Baby raccoon



Red fox kits



This baby northern cardinal can take care of itself.

➔ As you head outdoors this spring, you may encounter a variety of newborn wildlife. MDC asks that you “leave wildlife wild” by not interfering with newborns or young animals because doing so may do more harm than good.

“Young animals are rarely orphaned,” said MDC Science Branch Chief Sherri Russell. “If the young are left alone, the parent will usually return. Parents are normally out searching for food and cannot constantly attend to their offspring.”

Russell added that baby birds are a common newborn people want to help.

“If you see a chick on the ground hopping around and it has feathers, leave it alone and bring pets inside because it is a fledgling and the parents are nearby keeping an eye on it,” she said. “Fledglings can spend up to 10 days hopping on the ground while learning to fly. If you find one that is featherless, you can return it to the nesting area, if possible, as it probably fell out of the nest.”

Dogs catching baby rabbits and lawn mowers running over nests are other common issues.

“Rabbits seldom survive in captivity and can actually die of fright from being handled,” Russell said. “Even if the animal is injured, return it to the nest because the mother will most likely return.”

Despite what many think, wild mothers do not abandon their young because of a human scent, and most newborn animals do not survive in captivity.

“While people have good intentions, the care and rehabilitation of wild animals requires special training, knowledge, facilities — and permits,” she explained. “Without such care, wild animals will remain in poor health and could eventually die. And it is illegal to possess many wild animals without a valid state or federal permit.”

Russell also noted that wildlife can become dangerous as they mature, and can also carry parasites, disease, and can damage property.

“Native wildlife can carry mites, ticks, lice, fleas, flukes, roundworms, tapeworms, rabies, distemper, tuberculosis, respiratory diseases, and skin diseases,” Russell said. “Some of these can be transmitted to humans.”

Although tempting to take them into homes, the best help people can offer wild animals is to leave them alone.

For more information on Missouri’s many native wildlife species, visit the MDC online *Field Guide* at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Z9d](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/Z9d).



# Ask MDC

## Got a Question for Ask MDC?

Send it to [AskMDC@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:AskMDC@mdc.mo.gov)  
or call 573-522-4115, ext. 3848.

### **Q: Why are two sets of eastern bluebirds taking care of the same box? They have been nesting for about two weeks.**

→ Ornithologists don't know exactly why this happens, but they can offer educated guesses. This unusual circumstance may be a case of cooperative breeding where two breeding pairs are sharing the same nesting space. Cooperative breeding can be a sign of limited nest availability; the birds are making the most of a limited resource. Or, alternatively, these two pairs might be competing for the same nesting site.



South of the Missouri River, bluebirds are year-round residents. In spring, this resident population is joined by migrants coming from the south. All are competing for available nesting cavities. Bluebirds tend to be early and persistent nesters. The year-round residents and early arrivals tend to prevail against other competitors.

Eastern bluebirds begin arriving at their breeding locations in our state in March and April and migrate south in October and November. They are cavity nesters, laying eggs in a hollowed-out nook in a tree created by some other animal, such as a woodpecker. Competition for such sites has led people to construct nest boxes that fit this species' requirements. There are usually two to seven eggs in a clutch, and two broods per season.

Recent reports indicate the bluebird population has increased significantly. This may be due to the periodical cicadas we saw in 2024. For this reason, conservationists are encouraging the public to consider mounting additional bluebird nesting boxes.

You can read more about competition for nesting at [short.mdc.mo.gov/4j9](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/4j9).



### **Q: I am seeing a buck with unusual antlers. They are always covered in felt, and I don't think he has ever shed them. He keeps company with two other bucks of smaller stature. Could the odd antlers have been caused by an injury?**

Yes, possibly. Bucks typically shed antler velvet in late August to early September. When a buck's velvet remains attached to his antlers beyond the normal time, it's often caused by a birth defect known as "cryptorchidism," also known as undescended testes. This occurs when the normal production of testosterone is diminished, and the antler cycle of hardening, velvet shedding, and antler casting is disrupted. These same results can also occur in normal bucks that later suffer testicular injuries. For more information on this topic, visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/4jV](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/4jV).





Baltimore oriole

#### Q: What species of bird is this?

➔ This is likely an adult female Baltimore oriole (*Icterus galbula*). These birds are usually seen foraging high in leafy, deciduous trees in open woodlands, but not in deep forests. Forest edges, riverbanks, and small groves attract these birds, which is why they often visit parks and backyards. These birds build socklike hanging nests, woven from slender fibers and anchored to the forks of slim tree branches.

If this bird was a female orchard oriole (*Icterus spurius*), it likely

would have a greenish tint to its plumage and a more distinctively down-curved beak. Female Baltimore orioles, in contrast, are more yellow-orange with bold white wing bars.

Orioles are omnivores that search for caterpillars, beetles, fruit, and flower nectar. They will come to nectar feeders and will consume the pulp of oranges cut in half. During winter — when orioles are in Central America — they drink mostly nectar from flowers. For more information about orioles, visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/4jy](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/4jy).



### Lieutenant Aaron Pondrom

PULASKI, PHELPS,  
DENT COUNTIES

offers this month's

## AGENT ADVICE

Most fawns are born between May and June, so you are more likely to encounter one this time of year. Remember, if you find a fawn alone, it has not been abandoned or orphaned. Mothers are aware predators are watching, so to minimize danger to their young, they stay away for large parts of the day, returning only a couple times a day to feed and to move the fawn when necessary. Fawns bed down, lying flat and still, to avoid predators. If you find a fawn, enjoy the experience. Take a picture, but do not move or disturb it. Remember, the best thing you can do for a fawn's survival is leave it alone. For more information, visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/4A5](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/4A5).

## What IS it?

Can you  
guess this  
month's  
natural  
wonder?

The answer is on  
Page 9.





## SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN

### Fremont's Leather Flower

by Malissa Briggler

The only non-climbing clematis native to Missouri can be found growing on dolomite and limestone glades in eastern and southwestern Missouri. The flowers are urn- or bell-shaped, usually hanging on short stems, with lavender or white petals. Blooms appear in April to May, but the plant is easily recognizable at other times of the year by its large, leathery leaves. The fruits develop during the summer and form an interesting medusa-like seed pod.

#### WHY IT'S IMPERILED

Degradation of glade habitat by invasive species, encroachment of trees and shrubs, and lack of periodic burning have caused Fremont's leather flower to dramatically decline. Currently, there are only a few sites in Missouri where this plant is found.

#### MDC RESTORATION EFFORTS

MDC tracks populations and works with landowners and partners that own and manage the land where this plant occurs. Efforts to restore populations of this rare species include protection and management of high-quality glade habitats.

#### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you are visiting a glade in Missouri and see Fremont's leather flower, contact Missouri State Botanist Malissa Briggler, who also serves as the department's wildlife diversity coordinator, at [malissa.briggler@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:malissa.briggler@mdc.mo.gov). Your help can provide valuable information needed to determine the status of this rare species in our state.





## APPLY FOR ELK AND BEAR HUNTING PERMITS

Hunters interested in pursuing black bear and/or elk in Missouri this fall need to apply for a limited number of permits in May.

MDC will offer 600 permits for the taking of a maximum of 40 black bears from three MDC black bear management zones in the southern part of the state during the 2025 Missouri black bear hunting season, Oct. 18–31. MDC increased the number of available permits from 400 to 600 for additional hunter opportunities and lengthened the season to incorporate an additional weekend for hunting. Missouri hunters harvested 15 black bears during the 2024 season with five being females and 10 being males. Get more information and apply during May at [short.mdc.mo.gov/4js](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/4js).

MDC will again offer five permits to hunt bull elk in Missouri this fall with at least one permit designated for qualifying landowners who own property in Carter, Reynolds, or Shannon counties and the remaining permits for qualifying residents. MDC has designated the elk archery portion to run Oct. 18–26 and the elk firearms portion to run Dec. 13–21. Get more information and apply during May at [short.mdc.mo.gov/4jn](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/4jn).



## GET MDC'S NEW FISHING PROSPECTS BOOKLET

MDC's new *Fishing Prospects* booklet contains summaries of fish-population surveys taken last fall at many MDC-managed areas with predictions of "best bets" locations for catching certain fish species. The booklet is available at MDC locations where publications are found, online at [fishing.mdc.mo.gov](https://fishing.mdc.mo.gov), through our free MO Fishing app, and through our free information order form at [short.mdc.mo.gov/4fk](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/4fk).



## CELEBRATE CAPE NATURE CENTER TURNING 20

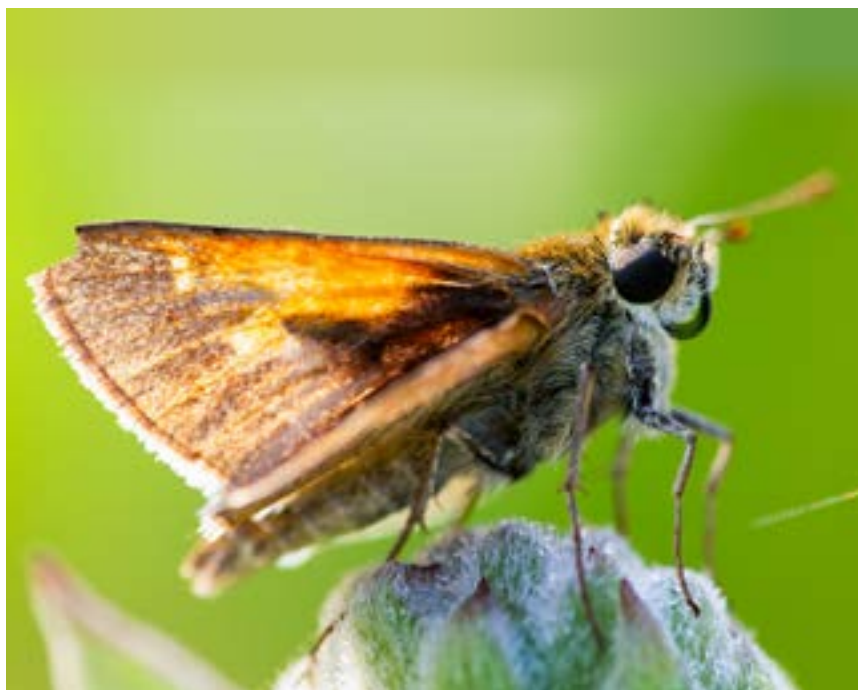
Bring family and friends of all ages to the Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center on Saturday, May 3, to celebrate our 20th anniversary. Free indoor and outdoor fun — including archery, fishing, outdoor cooking, and more — will be available from 1–4 p.m.

Get one last look at the nature center's popular ambassador animal — the conjoined twin western ratsnakes, known as the "two-headed snake." They will be moving off public display to enjoy a private retirement after 20 years. They have been at the nature center since it opened.

In case of rain, some activities may be altered. Learn more about the nature center at [short.mdc.mo.gov/4jd](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/4jd).

## WHAT IS IT? PECK'S SKIPPER

Found in fields, lawns, and other open habitats, peck's skippers fly from May through October. They can be identified by the one yellow hindwing rectangle that is wider than the others. Males and females are similar, but females are darker. Adults visit a variety of flowers, including clovers, sunflowers, milkweed, butterfly bush, and more. This species commonly rests with its forewings held open in a V-shape while the hindwings are held out horizontally to the side.







# FOUR-SEASON







# FLOATING



MISSOURI RIVERS OFFER YEAR-  
ROUND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE  
ADVENTUROUS, PREPARED

**by Tim Kjellesvik | photographs by David Stonner**



For many, floating is a seasonal pastime, and that's a downright shame.

With the right gear and planning, there's nothing stopping you from paddling your way through all four seasons, right here in Missouri.

To give you a little nudge off the gravel bar and into the current, we've selected four perfect rivers, each with their own seasonal charm, to get you out there on the water, regardless of the time of year. Keep reading to learn about special gear considerations and wildlife encounters for each destination.

## SUMMER SPLASHING DOWN THE MERAMEC RIVER

If ever there was a tale of two rivers, it would be the Meramec River. Located along the eastern side of Missouri, this stream generally follows the trajectory of Interstate 44. For those who only know the lower section, you may be surprised to learn that this turbid, slow-moving metropolitan river is a clear-blue meandering gem in its rural upper stretches. You'll see this duality in full display if you plan a summer float on this stream.

Depending on water, the floatable section of the river is generally considered to start around the Highway 8 bridge, just upstream from Meramec Spring Park. It's a simple, gravel access point and chances are good during our hot Missouri summers, the water may be too skinny here to float.

Instead, keep the AC cranked and roll on down to the quaint Ozark town of Steelville. This river community

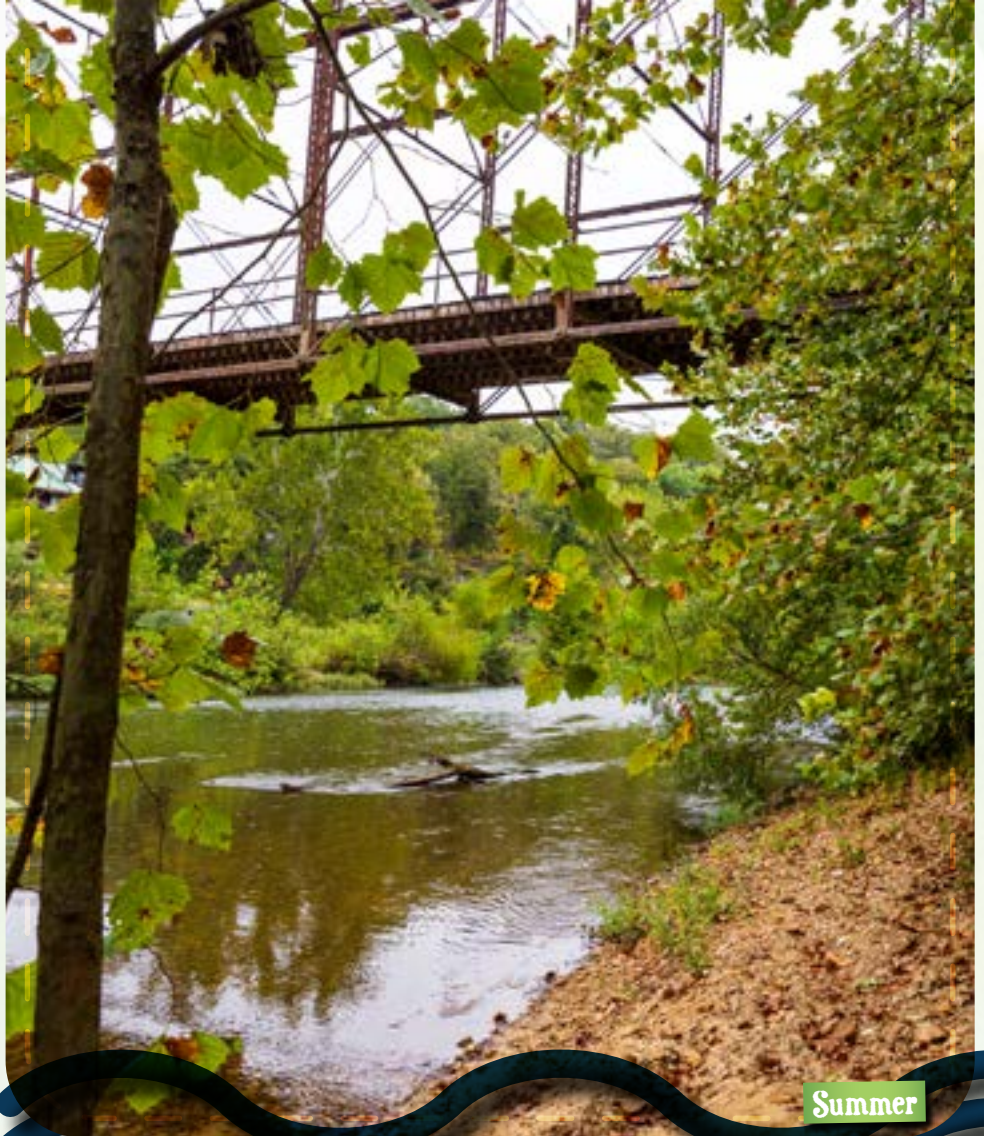
springs to life in the summer and is a great place to soak in the local scene, pick up some souvenirs, grab a bite, even stock up on last-minute supplies for your floating adventure. Any portion of the roughly 60 river miles between here and St. Clair will provide no shortage of breathtaking views and points of interest to punctuate the trip. Wildlife abounds here, too, with chances of spotting prehistoric gar breaking the river's surface to grab a gulp of air.

With the high number of outfitters in the area, it won't be hard to coordinate a shuttle or even rent boats. Just be sure to coordinate well in advance. Summer is by far the busy season for livery services. Concerned about crowds? Timing your trip midweek can help you avoid some of the party barge

traffic and give you more options with the many outfitters in the area.

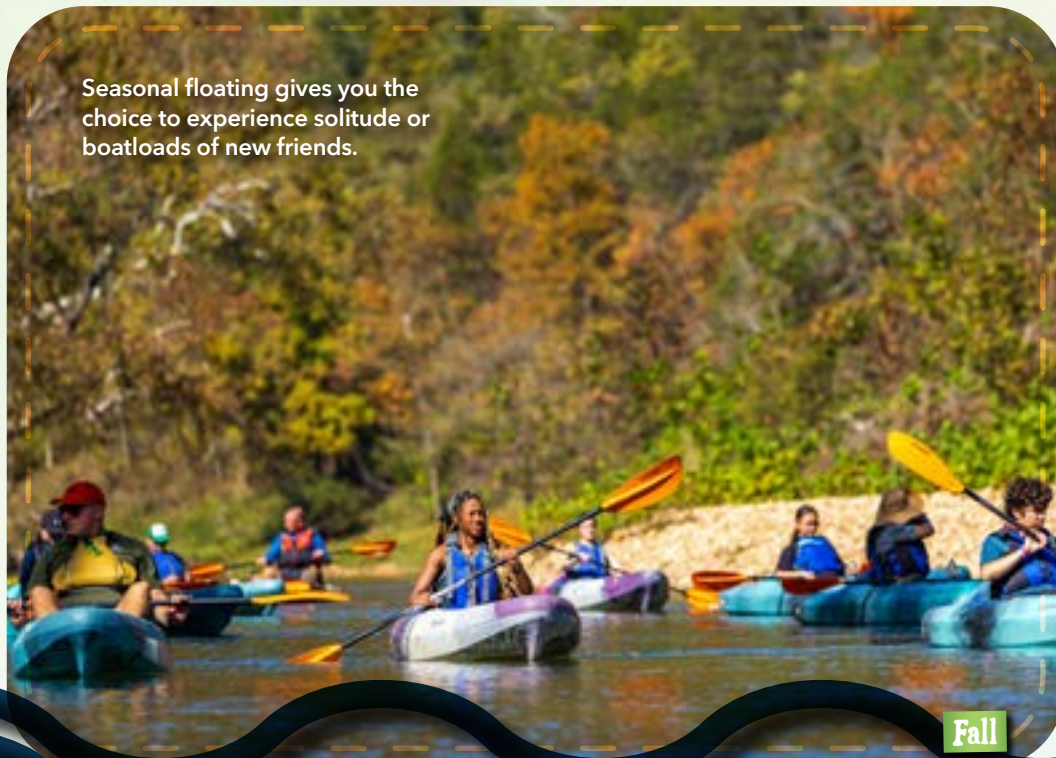
If you're fascinated by caves, be sure to look at the section that includes Meramec State Park around river mile 85. You'll be treated to destination caves like Green, Panther, and Fisher. In fact, Meramec State Park can serve as a great start or finish point for your summertime Meramec float.

The summer sun can be brutal. Be sure to pack sunscreen, brimmed hats, and a dry bag with lightweight, long-sleeve shirts and pants. Be proactive about hydration and bring plenty of drinking water. Bug spray can keep biting and stinging insects at bay, allowing you to enjoy your float. Summer storms brew quickly, so check the forecast before you go and keep an eye on the skies.



Summer





## FALL FLOATING DOWN THE CURRENT RIVER

The Show-Me State nickname is never truer than during the grandeur of a Missouri autumn. Crisp yellows, burnt golds, and fiery oranges dapple the Current River valley making this stream in the southern portion of the state a top-tier fall floating destination. As one of the two rivers making up the Ozark National Scenic Riverways (the other being the Jacks Fork), this famous stream stays charged year-round from numerous springs, each contributing thousands of gallons of deep-blue, mineral-rich waters. Trout anglers are familiar with the headwaters at the confluence of Pigeon Creek and Montauk Spring at Montauk State Park, a mecca for anglers in search of rainbows and browns.

While the upper section of the Current River attracts angling attention, the 70-mile middle section, from Akers Ferry through Van Buren, should be on your fall float list. This segment of stream offers numerous access points, allowing you to dial in just the right distance and duration for your trip. The biggest of the four rivers in this article, chances are best on this stream for encountering motorized boats.

A few classic, day-trip options are the sections between Akers Ferry and Pulltite or farther down, from Waymeyer to Van Buren. If you choose the former, make plans to peek into Rock House Cave around river mile 24.2.

Autumn on the Current River provides a front-row seat for chances to see rutting whitetails and other wildlife wonders, like northern map and

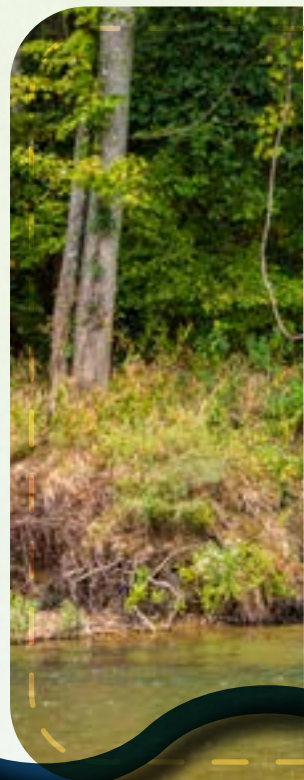
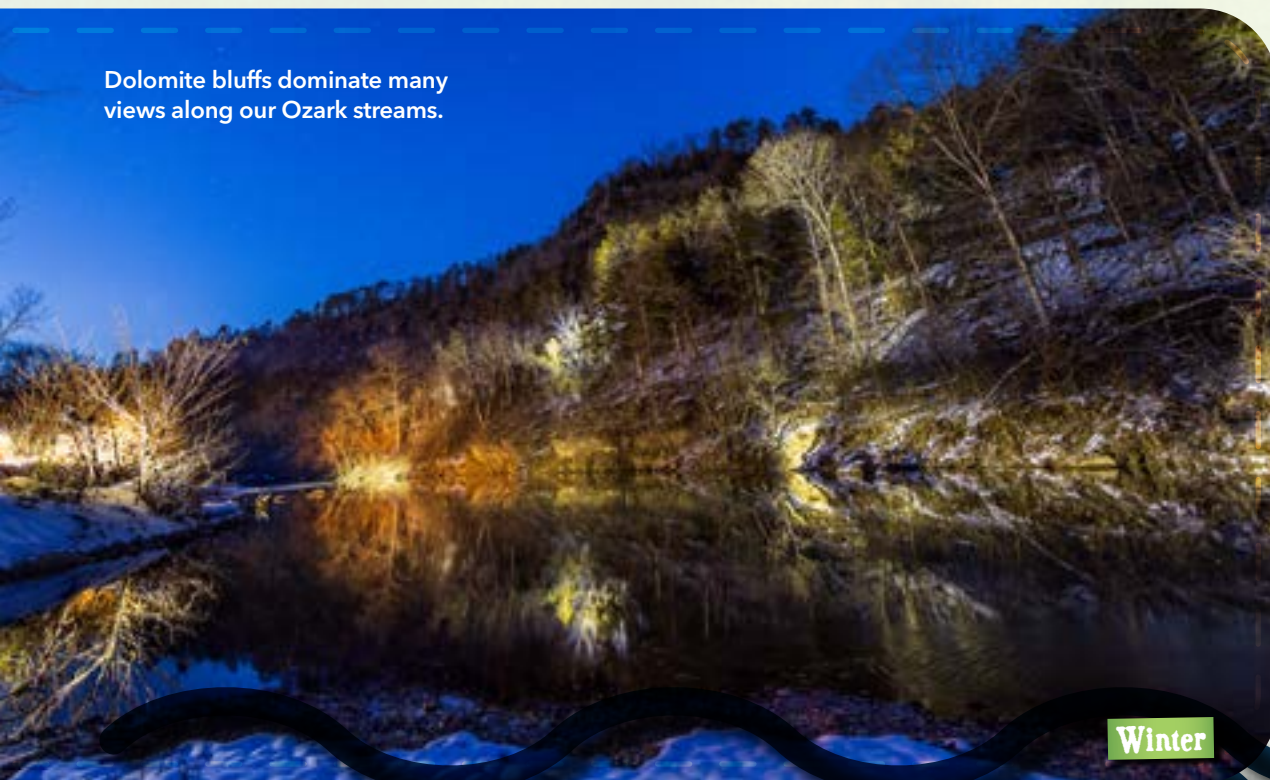
softshell turtles basking one last time before retiring into the river bottom mud for winter. Anglers should key in on root wads and boulders in deep sections for big smallmouth bass. Casting minnow imitations near weed-lines is a great way to hook up with the elusive chain pickerel.

Like a spring float, autumn days in Missouri on the Current River can present a wide array of weather, so be sure your dry bag is packed accordingly. A windproof outer shell, stocking cap, and gloves go a long way to cut the chill and can be shed easily as the day warms up.

## WINTER ON THE ELEVEN POINT RIVER

If solitude, serenity, and stark beauty are what you're seeking, the Eleven Point River in winter is hard to beat. Blessed





Dolomite bluffs dominate many views along our Ozark streams.

by multiple springs, broken down old millworks, and relict structures from early settlers, the Eleven Point River east of West Plains is a float through history as much as it is an adventure through gorgeous Ozark bluffs and forest.

Designated a national wild and scenic river in 1968, the Eleven Point River corridor touches the Mark Twain National Forest and the Irish Wilderness, providing an infinite number of possibilities for off-river side quests. Much of it also winds its way through private lands, so consult a good mapping app with parcel data before venturing too far away from the banks to explore.

The remote nature of this stream makes it one of the least visited in this list. That trend only intensifies during

the winter, when only the most adventuresome are willing to layer up and put in at any one of its accesses.

The Greer Spring access at river mile 16.6 is a solid choice for a winter put-in location. Even with low-water conditions, the river below this point is easily floatable thanks to the spring's daily 210-million-gallon contribution to the stream. The section from here to Whitten Access is the perfect length for a day trip with plenty of points of interest, like Turner Spring and Turner Mill, about 5 miles downstream.

Anglers should pack a fly rod for good-sized rainbows, which can be found amid the population of wild and stocked fish. This section of the Eleven Point River transitions from a Blue Ribbon to White

Ribbon trout management area, so be sure to heed special angling regulations.

A winter float down the Eleven Point River below Greer Spring demands cold-weather gear, a fire-starting kit, and a dry bag with extra warm clothes in case someone takes an unplanned dip and needs to warm up. Because the water discharging from the spring is around 55 degrees, depending on the weather that day, the river temperature could be greater than the air temperature.

### SPRINGTIME ON THE JACKS FORK

As the hills and hollers of southern Missouri green up and the blooming dogwoods add their splash of white, the intrepid paddler gains access to the springtime delights of floatable water

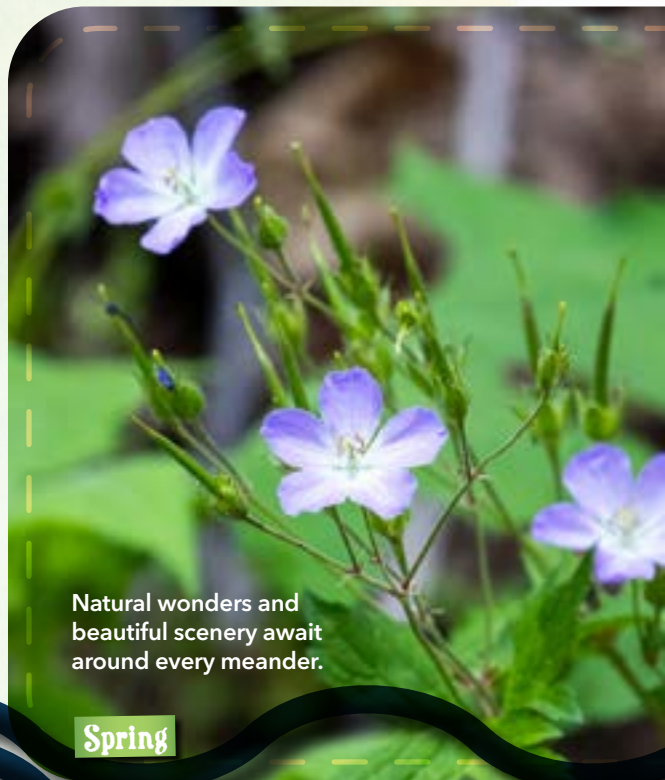




Spring



Spring



Natural wonders and beautiful scenery await around every meander.

Spring

on the Jacks Fork. Often too shallow to float at other times of the year, spring snow melts and rains make the alternating riffly gravel runs and brooding bouldery pools above Alley Spring an engaging and lively paddling experience.

Considered to be one of the best early starting points on the first 30 miles of this river, check out the Buck Hollow put-in at Highway 17, northeast of Mountain View. Be sure to make time for a stop at the enchanting Blue Spring a few miles downriver.

Just a few more miles downriver is the iconic Jam Up Cave, with its eponymous creek and tell-tale boulder field spilling into the Jacks Fork. This natural tunnel is worth the scramble up to get inside and is a must-see stop on your float.

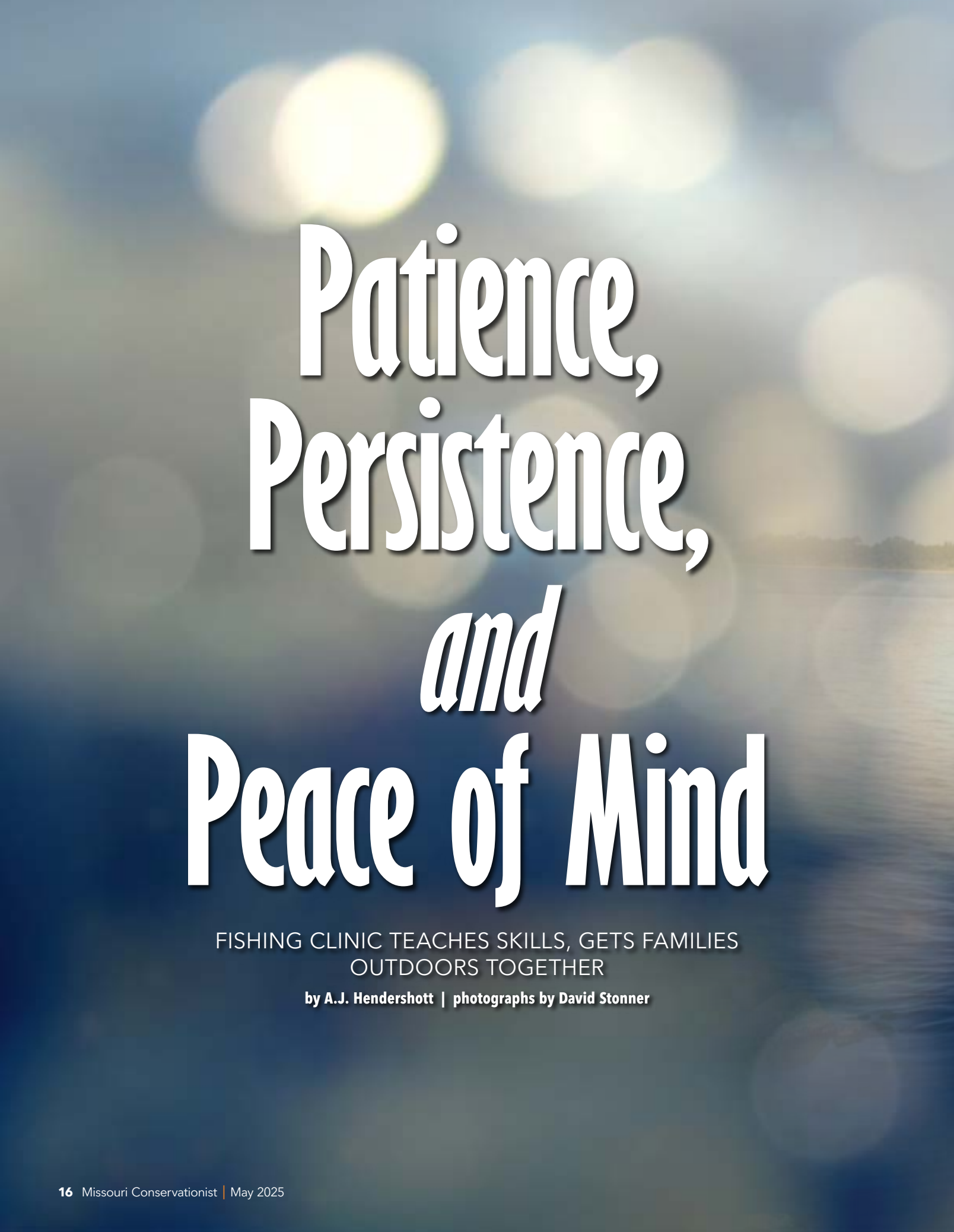
The steep Jacks Fork valley, walled in by dolomite cliffs creates a unique ecosystem that's home to multiple species endemic to the Ozarks, like the checkered madtom fish and the spothanded crayfish. While on your float, keep your eyes peeled for rare species of birds, too, like the northern parula and cerulean warbler. Anglers should pack a spinning rod and baits that imitate crawfish. The Jacks Fork is a sleeper for scrappy smallmouth bass and goggle-eye.

Given the wide daily temperature swings of our springtime Ozarks, and the likelihood for tipping on this tight stream, a dry bag with a range of clothing is necessary. A fire source is a good idea, too.

Finally, the Jacks Fork runs through the Ozark National Scenic Riverways and is managed by the National Park Service, so be aware of any special rules and regulations that may be in place.

With so many great destination streams in Missouri, you now officially have no excuse to put that paddling gear in storage. With the right preparation, floating can be a year-round activity, unlocking seasonal wonders often overlooked by others. So, break out the boats, maps, and dry bags and start planning your next adventure right now. ▲

*Tim Kjellesvik works with hunting, cell cam, and shooting sports mobile apps for GSM Outdoors. Watch him on Drury Outdoors TV and podcast.*



# Patience, Persistence, *and* Peace of Mind

FISHING CLINIC TEACHES SKILLS, GETS FAMILIES  
OUTDOORS TOGETHER

by A.J. Hendershott | photographs by David Stonner





Cpl. Eric Heuring  
assists Brian Newton  
with a bobber.



Richard White and his sister Mia



## Gateway to the Community

Cpl. Eric Heuring, conservation agent in Dunklin County, has worked the annual fishing event ever since he started in 2003. Since that time, he has seen this event evolve into what it is today and how it impacts people.

Many of the children that attend this fishing clinic go on to become lifelong anglers.

“As an agent, I check people fishing at Combs Lake,” Heuring said. “The conversations that ensue often lead to a familiar story, as they explain they now fish because of their attendance at past fishing clinics here at Combs Lake. It’s their way of saying thanks for getting them into fishing.”

This annual clinic seems to lead to a lifelong love of fishing for many, but there is more.

“This event has a lot going for it — it is a day full of firsts,” Heuring said. “Kids get their first opportunity to fish, shoot a bow, take a boat ride, and most catch their first fish here.”

Heuring, along with 20 MDC staff, help deliver this event, and Heuring points out, “we have a lot of community partners. The biggest is the Missouri Bootheel Regional Consortium (MBRC), who helps organize the event.”

Other organizations, including local churches, the National Guard, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, local sheriff’s offices, local ambulance services, Scouting America, and the Missouri State Highway Patrol – Water Patrol Division, offer much needed assistance to the event, Heuring said.

“I love that kids get to interact with law enforcement in a positive way,” he said. “It allows us to develop a relationship with people that establishes trust. And all of this happens because of fishing at Combs Lake.”

**E**leven-year-old Richard White focused on his bobberless line as he watched for any sign of movement. He’s on a mission to catch the biggest fish of the day. Every fish he has caught during his morning mission was met with the exact same enthusiasm no matter the species or the size. It is clear this young man loves to fish.

White isn’t alone in his enthusiasm for the day’s activity. Hundreds of children just like him attend this fishing clinic at Combs Lake on Little River Conservation Area (CA) near Kennett each year and what they get from it may be more than you expect.





Heuring considers this good community policing. "These fishing events are big memories for these kids and their families. We have given them something beyond a new hobby."

### From Fish to Family

MBRC Chief Executive Officer Cynthia Dean says the goal of her organization is to improve the lives of the people in the southeastern part of Missouri, known as the Bootheel. Dean was part of the maiden voyage of the fishing clinic in 2000, and she explained that the clinic was meant to do more than expose children to fishing.

"This clinic was designed to improve the lives of families, infants, and dads," Dean said. "Many of these dads we are reaching out to are not involved with their children or the child's mother, so there isn't much positive interaction. We started with the notion of working with fathers to change that, and it has evolved into a family event.

"The event has no budget," she went on to explain. "It works because everything is strictly donated. Prizes and funds for the lunch are all donated. One business owner told me he never had anyone to take him fishing but he wished he had. So, he wanted to be a part of this and donated some money to support it."

Heuring said they get the fathers involved with assisting the children with tasks like rebaiting hooks, untangling lines, and taking fish off the hook. Many of these dads had zero experience fishing, and this experience allowed them to be a part of the teaching effort in front of their children.

"Helping a child learn to fish places the dads in a position of doing something positive in a way that some of them have never experienced before," said Dean. "This event brings families together. It shows them what the Conservation Department does, and some don't even know that Combs Lake exists."

The event allows moms and dads to connect to something positive, and many coparent in ways they have not done previously. Consequently, they create a new bond and learn a new activity as a family, Dean said.

"They never forget this event and I get asked many times each summer when the next one will be," she said. "They look forward to it. Today we are seeing parents who were children when the event was just starting out."

**This event has a lot going for it — it is a day full of firsts. Kids get their first opportunity to fish, shoot a bow, take a boat ride, and most catch their first fish here."**

—CPL. ERIC HEURING





Mario McGraw and his son, Messiah

**“It means the world to me getting this quality time with him and making memories. I’m glad I can pass this along to the next generation.”**

—MARIO MCGRAW

Heuring has had similar experiences.

“I see adults fishing around the lake who frequently say they have a picture at home of me and them with their first fish,” he said.

### Bringing Families Together

Mario McGraw came from Kennett to fish with his preschool son, Messiah.

“It means the world to me getting this quality time with him and making memories,” McGraw said. “I’m glad I can pass this along to the next generation.”

McGraw mentions that he hopes his son learns from fishing what he has.

“I learned patience, persistence, and peace of mind,” McGraw said. “By coming out here, you can get peace of mind and cope with yourself.”

Inga West, from Caruthersville, had her own thoughts on bringing her three teenage children to fish.

“They are teenagers, so they are tempted to just sit around with technology and not spend much time together,” West said.

West was all smiles as she watched her daughters learn to bait their own hook, catch fish, and take them off all by themselves. Inga’s son, Sincere West, was helping his sisters if their lines got caught on a log or wedged between rocks. When asked why he

was doing that even though it cost him time with his own fishing, he said, “They’re my sisters, I got to help them. That’s what you do.”

His sister Franchon appreciated the assistance and was excited with every fish she caught.

“I want to catch a catfish that will win the prize,” Franchon said with a smile. “I want my family to catch fish, too, but not as big as mine.”

Inglad West, the youngest of the three, also had her sights set on what to catch.

“I want to catch a bass, and a big one.”

Within minutes and with some encouragement from her mother, Inglad was baiting the hook and catching her own fish. While that bass may have been elusive, she was all smiles as she continued catching fish.

While Inga wasn’t actively fishing, she was engaged and soaking it all in.

“They will remember this,” said West.

She was already hooked on this fishing clinic and was making plans to attend again. “This is our first year of many to come. We will be back for the next one for sure.”

### Cleaning Up

Another aspect of the fishing clinic is litter patrol where the children are given a trash bag, and the largest collection of trash is awarded a prize. Dean recalled a little girl who was excited about the trash pickup.

“She jumped out of the van and wanted her trash bag straight away so she could get started picking up trash,” she said. “She wanted that prize.”





“We teach them about leaving a place cleaner than how they found it,” Heuring added. “Over the years it has helped keep Combs Lake cleaner, and I love that. The kids grow up to be adults who don’t like litter.”

## Reeling It All In

The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation gives some insight into the obvious and hidden benefits to fishing. On their website, they share research that shows fishing has multiple benefits including better sleep, better heart function, confidence, improved immune response, and increased emotional stability. They even indicate the benefits range from small children all the way up to senior adults.

The benefits the MBRC is trying to foster is a solid approach and is backed up by science. Nationwide research indicates children who learn to fish experience more patience and learn to wait for gratification. A younger child who fishes learns motor skills, balance, and using both sides of the body, which aids cognitive development. Then as they mature, they also become more confident thanks to those foundational experiences. What is amazing is that all this benefit comes from time spent with something as simple as a line and pole.

Fishing transcends economic divides. Most anyone can fish if they have access to water. For many in southeast Missouri, it all starts with a clinic at Combs Lake on Little River CA.

Fishing benefits people in ways that go past supplying them with a hobby or wild caught food. It strengthens who they are, helps them develop, and builds up their family. And with all that benefit, you can’t deny the anticipation and thrill of watching that bobber twitch in the water.

Richard White was one of many youths who said they wanted to catch the biggest fish, and he did it. He tied for that honor with his 17½-inch channel catfish. After his winning catch, he was asked about what he likes about fishing: “I love fishing. I get to spend time with my parents and family. It’s fun to do and I love to eat fish.” ▲

The 2025 fishing clinic will occur **Aug. 9** and is open to families in southeast Missouri. Lunch is provided at no cost. Registration is not required. For more information, call MBRC at 573-471-9400.

*A.J. Hendershott is education supervisor for the Southeast and Ozark regions. He enjoys fishing and passing on that skill to others.*



A large field of yellow wildflowers, likely Gaillardia, stretches across the foreground and middle ground. The flowers are bright yellow with dark centers, growing on green stems. In the background, there are trees and a cloudy sky. A green sign with a white border is positioned in the upper right, containing text about a booklet. The sign is partially obscuring the flowers.

# Botanizing From Behind the Wheel

FREE BOOKLET HELPS YOU IDENTIFY  
MISSOURI'S ROADSIDE BLOOMS

by **Bonnie Chasteen**



It's May again,  
and that field  
on your way to  
work is covered  
in tiny yellow  
flowers, just  
like it was this  
time last year.  
You can't take  
your eyes off  
the road long  
enough to get  
a good look at  
the individual  
blossoms, but  
you'd sure like  
to know what  
they are.



"That's why we wanted to offer a free roadside wildflowers booklet," said Missouri State Botanist Malissa Briggler. She's talking about an MDC publication published in 2023.

Briggler said the value of *A Guide to Missouri's Roadside Wildflowers* "lies with people who may not think a lot about plants but see a particular flower on their way to work." She noted that MDC has been providing free online species identification information for a long time (check out [mdc.mo.gov/field-guide](https://mdc.mo.gov/field-guide)), but she said that the booklet is an easy-to-use handout drivers can keep in their gloveboxes.

"Just don't try to use it while you're driving," Briggler said. "Find a safe place to pull over and snap a photo with your phone if you don't have time or can't get close enough to the blossoms to examine them yourself."

She said that even a photo shot from middle distance can help you find your flower in the booklet.

### Gone in a Flash

In the booklet's introduction, Briggler noted the challenges of trying to identify blooms when you're driving.

"Most plant field guides are written with the assumption that the user can closely observe the subject, has an opportunity to look at fine details, and can take their time observing those details," she wrote.

"Unlike when we're trying to identify a bird, fish, snake, etc., we usually do not need to worry about plants 'getting away.' Except when we are in a moving car. The plant did not go anywhere, but we sure did. In a flash, our opportunity to identify the plant is over. Botanists have a term for this: windshield botanizing."

To make windshield botanizing easy, she focused on 25 of the most common flowers drivers are likely to see along Missouri's roadsides. She also organized them by flower color: white, blue/purple, orange, and yellow, and she listed them next to or near similar-looking flowers as much as possible.

In addition to close-up and windshield-view shots, the book provides clues about Missouri's main types of natural communities — or habitats.

"This helps readers understand the connections between individual plants and the places where they can expect to see them," she said.

For example, the only orange flower listed in the booklet is butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*). This plant is scattered throughout Missouri, but you can expect to see it in open, dry habitats such as





Proper roadside wildflower management includes invasive plant control and other management techniques.



prairies, glades (which resemble rocky mini-deserts), and pastures.

While it's possible to see most of the booklet's flowers anywhere in the state, it's important to know and remember that native plants originated in Missouri's natural communities, Briggler said. She noted that many of the state's natural communities — prairies, savannas, glades, and wetlands, for example — have declined since settlement.

"Connecting our beautiful native roadside wildflowers with the prairies, glades, wetlands, and forests they came from can help us better conserve those natural communities," she said.

### Who Planted Those Flowers?

Briggler noted that roadside wildflowers are often opportunistic. They've had the chance to grow near roadsides because weather or animals have carried their seeds or roots there, or because they were already in the soil when roads were built.

"On the western side of the state, native prairies were there when the road went through," said Mark Aufdenberg, senior roadside management specialist for the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT). "You can still see native prairie wildflowers growing along or near those roads."

He went on to explain MoDOT's policy for managing 34,000 miles of Missouri roadsides.

"Statewide, our policy is that any disturbing of the right of way is followed by seeding native plants," he said. By "disturbing," Aufdenberg said the policy means construction or a major expansion.

"We plant cool-season grasses immediately along roadsides for sight distance reasons," he said. "Anything outside of the first 30 foot (from the center of the road) is all native grasses and wildflowers."

He noted that I-70 has a lot of natives currently, and that the state has funded a major expansion of this economically important artery for the next several years.

"Whatever is disturbed will be reseeded in natives," he said.

Aside from MoDOT, many entities and individuals have established native wildflowers along private and public roadsides throughout Missouri. More than 130 of them are Grow Native! professional members. Grow Native! is a marketing and education program of the Missouri Prairie Foundation (MPF).

"Grow Native! professional members include several Missouri cities and universities as well

as numerous nonprofit organizations and native plant businesses," said MPF Executive Director Carol Davit. She added that they are true conservation heroes. "They are harvesting native seed, growing and selling native plants, designing and stewarding native landscapes, and advocating for and educating about the many benefits of native plants in altered landscapes."

### Not all Blooms are Beneficial

One major force threatening Missouri's native wildflowers — and the natural communities that give rise to them — is nonnative invasive plants like musk thistle. Once they appear, these plants spread quickly, displacing crops and pasture grasses on farms and native plants in natural communities.

Briggler said that helping readers know what they're looking at along roadsides gives them the power to identify and control invasive plants on their property. The booklet includes eight nonnative and invasive species readers have most likely seen growing along Missouri roadsides.

To keep invasive plants from moving away from roadsides and into adjoining natural communities, MDC teamed up with MoDOT and MPF to launch the Invasive Species Strike Team. In development for many years, the program began formally in the state's southeast region in 2020. Since then, "we've distributed 28 UTVs (utility task vehicles) to our crews statewide," said MoDOT's Aufdenberg. He added that MDC equipped the UTVs with injection sprayers to help field crews use herbicide more efficiently. "It saves on costs and environmental impact," he said. "Crews can spot spray as much as possible."

Invasive musk thistle crowds out native plants.



MDC Invasive Species Coordinator Angela Sokolowski agreed. "With such precise sprayers, crews are not leaving behind swaths of dead vegetation. They can select-spray just the invasives, leaving native grasses and wildflowers to reseed. This is really important along the miles of roadsides that border conservation areas."

MPF's Davit added that MoDOT's work to treat invasive plants along the highways under their jurisdiction "is critically important to slow the spread of nonnative, invasive plants that threaten Missouri's native biodiversity." She said MPF is pleased to partner with MDC and MoDOT on the program



# When and Where to see Roadside Wildflowers

Many of the booklet’s blossoms can appear just about anywhere in the state during their blooming season. Here’s a quick overview of the months and places you can expect to see five of Missouri’s showiest native wildflowers. Consider planning road trips around the bloom times of your favorite wildflowers.



MAY-JULY:  
**PALE PURPLE CONEFLOWER**  
One of Missouri’s five types of echinacea, the pale purple coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*) resembles a badminton birdie, with petals that hang down, and long narrow leaves that are mostly at the base of the plant. Associated with prairies, savannas, and glades, the pale purple coneflower is found throughout most of Missouri but is more common on the western side of the state. Pale purple coneflower often appears along roadsides that were planted for highway beautification.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG
SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC



MAY-AUGUST:  
**MISSOURI EVENING PRIMROSE**  
Missouri evening primrose (*Oenothera macrocarpa*) is a short plant reaching only 12–18 inches tall. What it lacks in height, it makes up for in floral display. The four bright yellow petals can make a flower the size of a teacup saucer. It is a popular plant for native landscaping and is often included in plantings for roadside beautification. Look for it along the tops of rocky road cuts, especially in the southern part of the state.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG
SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC



MAY-SEPTEMBER:  
**BUTTERFLY MILKWEED**  
One of Missouri’s 20 milkweed species, butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) shows up as flashes of orange color that are easy to spot along roadsides. Few other roadside wildflowers with that bright orange color appear during mid-summer when butterfly milkweed is at peak of flowering. Several stems 18–30 inches tall and clustered together can make the plant look like a small bush from a distance. As one might guess, butterflies are attracted to the plant as a nectar source, which makes it a common species in native landscaping and butterfly gardens.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG
SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC





JULY-OCTOBER:

### **PRAIRIE BLAZING STAR**

One of nine types of liatris in Missouri, prairie blazing star (*Liatris pycnostachya*) looks like stands of tall purple spikes. It is also easily identified by the dense arrangement of narrow, grasslike leaves along the stem. Scattered statewide, it can grow up to 5 feet tall, towering over other vegetation growing along roadsides.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG
SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC

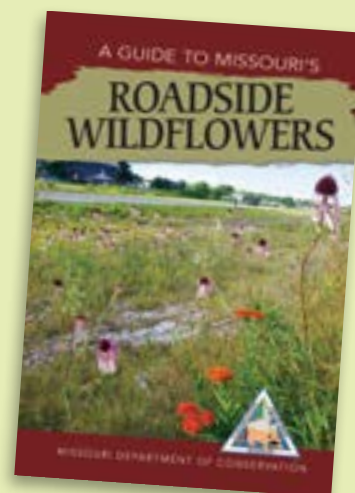


AUGUST-NOVEMBER:

### **TALL GOLDENROD**

One of 23 goldenrod species in Missouri, tall goldenrod (*Solidago altissima*) is usually regarded as a weed that grows abundantly in fallow places. It exhibits extensive underground growth that gives rise to multiple unbranched, leafy stems. Tall goldenrod has yellow flowers at the top of the stem that are grouped in a way that resembles a pyramid. Migrating monarchs and other pollinators depend on tall goldenrods for their readily available nectar in late summer and fall.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG
SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC



### **Free and Easy to Use**

This 8-by-5.5-inch booklet features 25 common species, including native wildflowers and a few widespread invasives like teasel and musk thistle.

The 68-page booklet is available at many MDC locations. Call ahead for availability. Missouri residents may order a free copy from [pubstaff@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:pubstaff@mdc.mo.gov). Provide the publication title and your shipping address. Call 573-522-0108 to order by phone. You can also download an accessible PDF at [short.mdc.mo.gov/4Y6](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/4Y6).

MDC retiree Bonnie Chasteen is a former staff writer for Xplor and the Missouri Conservationist.



# Get Outside

in MAY

→ Ways to connect with nature



## Our State Flower

Hawthorns are shrubs or small trees that occupy almost every kind of soil in every part of the state. In fact, there are dozens of kinds of hawthorns, but in the Show-Me State, there is one hawthorn that stands above the rest. That is the **downy hawthorn**. Named Missouri's official state flower in 1923, its flowers resemble small apple blossoms.



## Bee Thankful

May 20 is World Bee Day, a day set aside to acknowledge the role and importance of bees and other pollinators in our ecosystem. Take some time to get to know the species of bumblebees that call Missouri home. You may notice bumblebees more this month, but their numbers are declining. If you find bumblebees on your property, watch them from afar and leave them be. To learn more about Missouri's bumblebees and how you can help them, visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/48L](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/48L).



Common eastern bumblebee



American bumblebee



Black and gold bumblebee

## A Month for Mothers

May is the month we celebrate our mothers. But mothers in the animal kingdom also deserve some recognition. In most species, it is the female that takes on most of the responsibility of raising young. The female **crayfish**, for example, carries her eggs on her abdomen. Even after they hatch, which may take two to 20 weeks, they remain attached to her through two molts, or about a month. That is a lot of togetherness.

VIRTUAL

## LEARN TO FISH: Catfishing Under the Moon

Friday • May 16 • 12–1 p.m.

Online only

Registration required by May 16. To register, call 888-283-0364 or visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/4jJ](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/4jJ).

All ages

Catfishing is a great way to spend time in nature and catch some food. With the temperatures going up, fish tend to be less active during the day. Join us for this virtual program about night fishing for catfish. You can expect to learn equipment, how to choose a location, common species, safety, and more.

### Natural Events to See This Month

Here's what's going on in the natural world.



Common nighthawks arrive.



Hoary bats are commonly seen.



Regal moths fly through August.



SOUTHEAST REGION

## CONSERVATION FAMILIES: Time to Trap Insects

Saturday • May 17 • 9:30–11:30 p.m.

Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center  
2289 County Park Drive, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Registration is not required. For more information, visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/4jU](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/4jU) or call 573-290-5218.

All ages

Hear that beetle buzzing past? See that butterfly fluttering along? Peep the bug burrowing in the dirt? Come and go at your leisure to this insect-centered event. Enjoy a naturalist-led table focusing on interesting insects found in Missouri. Then, take a net, magnifying glass, and insect keeper and attempt to catch some intriguing insects yourself. With the aid of an insect identification book and naturalist staff, identify each insect you catch.



Click beetle

## A Capella Amphibians

Frogs and toads come together with their unique calls, filling the air with a soundtrack for spring. See if you can distinguish one call from another. Here's just a few examples:

- **Blanchard's cricket frog:** a metallic *gick, gick, gick*.
- **Gray treefrog:** a musical, birdlike *trill*.
- **Eastern narrow-mouthed toad:** a bleating, nasal *baaaa*, which sounds like a lamb.
- **Western narrow-mouthed toad:** a short *peel* sound, similar to a buzzing bee.

For more information on Missouri's frogs and toads and their sounds, visit MDC's online *Field Guide* at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Z9d](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/Z9d).



Blanchard's cricket frog



Gray treefrog



Eastern narrow-mouthed toad



Western narrow-mouthed toad



Blue-eyed  
Mary blooms.



Eastern  
collared  
lizards  
mate.

## SIMPLE OUTDOOR MOMENTS



## BEGINNER BIRDWATCHING

Spending time in nature  
is never wasted.

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# Places to Go

## NORTHWEST REGION

### Emmet and Leah Seat Memorial Conservation Area

Bag a turkey; cast a line; watch a bird  
by Larry Archer

✧ As spring turkey season winds down in early May, northwest Missouri's Emmet and Leah Seat Memorial Conservation Area (CA) transforms into a place where anglers and birders alike can succeed in their pursuits.

Located on nearly 3,500 acres in Worth and Gentry counties, Seat Memorial CA draws hunters, anglers, and birders, said Wildlife Biologist Jonathan McCulley.

"In May, turkey season is just closing off, so you have a little bit of turkey hunting there at the beginning of the month, but then it's mostly just people coming in and fishing the area," McCulley said.

With 17 fishing ponds, ranging from one-half acre to nearly 6 acres, Seat Memorial CA offers options for casting a line, whether one wants to increase their odds at one of the three stocked ponds or is looking for quiet solitude at one of the smaller, remote ponds.

Seat Memorial CA's terrain and more than 12 miles of mowed maintenance roads opens the area to those interested in watching the migrating grassland species that make the area their home in the spring. It's also time for MDC staff to do their own birdwatching.

"We do our spring bird counts," he said. "We're listening for grassland birds and quail calls."



"It's mostly rolling hills with open grasslands and wooded draws."

—Wildlife Biologist  
Jonathan McCulley

NOPPADOL PAOTONG





## EMMET AND LEAH SEAT MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

consists of 3,479 acres in Gentry and Worth counties. From Albany, take Route C north 11 miles, then Route M east 1 mile.

40.3994, -94.2392

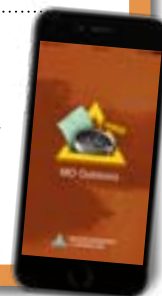
[short.mdc.mo.gov/4j6](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/4j6) 660-646-6122

### WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU VISIT

-  **Archery** Two field archery walking courses.
-  **Bicycling** Includes 12.1 miles of service and unimproved roads open to bicycling.
-  **Birdwatching** The eBird list of birds recorded at Seat Memorial CA is available at [short.mdc.mo.gov/4jB](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/4jB).
-  **Camping** Individual campsites.
-  **Fishing** Black bass, catfish, sunfish, and white bass.
-  **Hunting** **Deer and turkey**  
Regulations are subject to annual changes. Refer to MDC's regulation page online at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Zjw](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zjw).  
Also **dove, quail, and rabbit**

### DISCOVER MO OUTDOORS

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### WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN YOU VISIT



Wood duck



Small-mouthed salamander



Striped skunks



Prairie kingsnake





## Hoary Puccoon (Orange Puccoon)

*Lithospermum canescens*

Status	Size	Distribution
Native	Height: 6–12 inches	Statewide, except lowlands of southeast Missouri

**H**oary puccoon's small, bright orange flowers appear from March through June, blooming on spirally condensed stalks that uncoil and elongate as more flowers open toward the tip. Each flower is tubular with five lobes. The hoary puccoon's leaves, inconspicuous at flowering time, point upward and are very hairy.

Hoary puccoon is found in glades, savannas, upland and loess hill prairies, ledges and tops of bluffs, openings of moist upland forests, dry upland forests, and sometimes along edges of lakes. Also found in pastures, along railroads and roadsides, and in open, disturbed areas.



### ECOSYSTEM CONNECTIONS

A wide variety of bees and butterflies harvest nectar from these showy flowers, pollinating them in the process.



### HUMAN CONNECTIONS

There is poetry in the names of many wildflowers and hoary puccoon is no exception. "Hoary" means gray or white with age, and the leaves do offer a downy appearance. "Puccoon" is from the Powhatan/Virginia Algonquian word "poughkone" and refers to plants that yield a purple, red, or yellow dye. Native American and Asian cultures have a history of using the red or purple dye made from the roots to color fabrics, as body decoration, and other uses.

Today, Missouri species of *Lithospermum* are mainly used as native garden flowers. Remember, never dig plants from natural habitats. Purchase them at reputable native plant nurseries.



# Outdoor Calendar

❖ MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION ❖

## FISHING

### Black Bass

Impounded waters and non-Ozark streams:  
Open all year

Most streams south of the Missouri River:

- ▶ Catch-and-Release:  
March 1–May 23, 2025
- ▶ Catch-and-Keep:  
May 24, 2025–Feb. 28, 2026

### Bullfrog, Green Frog

June 30 at sunset–Oct. 31, 2025

### Nongame Fish Giggling

Impounded waters, sunrise to sunset:  
Feb. 16–Sept. 14, 2025

### Paddlefish

On the Mississippi River:  
March 15–May 15, 2025  
Sept. 15–Dec. 15, 2025

### Trout Parks

State trout parks are open seven days a week  
March 1 through Oct. 31.

Catch-and-Keep:  
March 1–Oct. 31, 2025



*\*Only hunters selected through a random drawing may participate in these hunting seasons.*

For complete information about seasons, limits, methods, and restrictions, consult the *Wildlife Code of Missouri* at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Zib](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zib). Current hunting, trapping, and fishing regulation booklets are available from local permit vendors or online at [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZZf](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZZf).

## Buy Permits and Permit Card

Buy Missouri hunting and fishing permits from numerous vendors around the state or online at [mdc.mo.gov/buypermits](http://mdc.mo.gov/buypermits). View permits through our free mobile apps, MO Hunting and MO Fishing.



Permit cards are an additional way to show proof of most permits. Buy a new permit card for a one-time fee of \$5 at [mdc.mo.gov/buypermits](http://mdc.mo.gov/buypermits). Buyers can select from five images: bass, range, buck, bluebird, or mallard duck.



## HUNTING

### Black Bear\*

Oct. 18–31, 2025

### Bullfrog, Green Frog

June 30 at sunset–Oct. 31, 2025

### Coyote

Restrictions apply during April, spring turkey season, and firearms deer season.

Open all year

### Deer

Archery:

Sept. 15–Nov. 14, 2025  
Nov. 26, 2025–Jan. 15, 2026

Firearms:

- ▶ Early Antlerless Portion (open areas only):  
Oct. 10–12, 2025
- ▶ Early Youth Portion (ages 6–15):  
Nov. 1–2, 2025
- ▶ November Portion:  
Nov. 15–25, 2025
- ▶ CWD Portion (open areas only):  
Nov. 26–30, 2025
- ▶ Late Youth Portion (ages 6–15):  
Nov. 28–30, 2025
- ▶ Late Antlerless Portion (open areas only):  
Dec. 6–14, 2025
- ▶ Alternative Methods Portion:  
Dec. 27, 2025–Jan. 6, 2026

### Elk\*

Archery:

Oct. 18–26, 2025

Firearms:

Dec. 13–21, 2025

### Groundhog (Woodchuck)

May 12–Dec. 15, 2025

### Pheasant

Youth (ages 6–15):  
Oct. 25–26, 2025

Regular:

Nov. 1, 2025–Jan. 15, 2026

### Quail

Youth (ages 6–15):  
Oct. 25–26, 2025

Regular:

Nov. 1, 2025–Jan. 15, 2026

### Rabbits

Oct. 1, 2025–Feb. 15, 2026

### Squirrels

May 24, 2025–Feb. 15, 2026

### Turkey

Spring:

- ▶ Spring:  
April 21–May 11, 2025

Fall:

- ▶ Archery:  
Sept. 15–Nov. 14, 2025  
Nov. 26, 2025–Jan. 15, 2026
- ▶ Firearms:  
Oct. 1–31, 2025

### Waterfowl

See the *Migratory Bird and Waterfowl Hunting Digest* or visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZZx](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZZx) for more information.





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Even this eastern calligrapher fly knows, May is a great time to get up close and personal with Missouri's wildflowers, like this tickseed coreopsis. It and many other spring-blooming wildflowers are bringing pops of color across the state's wild spaces. Get out there! What wildflowers will you discover?

📷 by **Noppadol Paothong**

**Free to Missouri households**

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